



City Council - Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee

Tuesday, April 23, 2024, 5:00 PM,

Join in Person: Front Conference Room, 645 Pine St. Burlington, VT 05401

Join via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/84603122855>

To call into the meeting, including to speak during public comment:

Phone: 312-626-6799, Webinar ID: 846 0312 2855

1. Agenda

1.1. Motion to amend/adopt.

2. Adopt Minutes

2.1. Minutes of 3.26.24

3. Public Forum

4. Deliberative Agenda

4.1. Committee Schedule, Priorities and Goal Setting

4.2. GMT City Loop Fare Policy in Burlington

5. Director's Report

5.1. Winooski Bridge & Intersection Councilor Question Follow Up - Written Update

5.2. User Fee Update

6. Councilor Items

7. Next Meeting

7.1. 5.28.24

8. Adjournment



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

c/o Department of Public Works
645 Pine Street, Suite A
Post Office Box 849
Burlington, VT 05402-0849

802.863.9094 VOX
802.863.0466 FAX
802.863.0450 TTY
www.burlingtonvt.gov

Councilor Mark Barlow, Chair, North District
Councilor Gene Bergman, Ward 2
Councilor Hannah King, Ward 8

Inquiries:
Madeline Suender
802.735.5324
msuender@burlingtonvt.gov

Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council
Wednesday March 26th, 2024 – 5:00PM

DPW Front Conference Room
645 Pine Street, Burlington, VT 05401

–DRAFT MINUTES–

Meeting starts 5:00pm

1. Agenda

Councilor Bergman moves to approve the agenda. Chair Barlow seconds. Councilor King not present for meeting. Director Chapin Spencer notes there is a Water Resources discussion item regarding water main break protocols in the Director's Report. All in favor, passes unanimously.

2. Minutes of:

- 2.27.24
- 3.13.24

Councilor Bergman moves to adopt both minutes as written. Chair Barlow seconds. All in favor, passes unanimously.

3. Public Forum

Pike Porter – Thanks everyone for providing airport information. Would like to request that the NetZero Energy Roadmap reflect all Airport and Transportation emissions.

Ashley Adams – Pleased to see report from airport. Larger issue for sustainability is expanding airport. Echo what Pike said regarding counting emissions reporting.

Closes at 5:03PM

4.1 VTANG/Airport Greenhouse Gas Emission Update

Airport: Director Nic Longo, Marie Freedman, Larry Lacky, Hannah Dusablon

VTANG: Col Dan Finnegan, Mr. Shannon Kelley – Environmental Manager, Major Mathew Lehman - Base Civil Engineer

Director Nic Longo goes over Airport presentation.

Col Dan Finnegan – Overview of MOU and updates. Resolution highlighted need to refine what we can and can't do in MOU. F35 Simulators are in place and used since before the aircraft were delivered. There is a limit to how much simulation can replace actual flights. The Air Force tells us how much we need to fly. Reducing aviation GHG emissions is being tackled by:

- Current flying rates are less than what is allowed.
- Started researching sustainable fuels which does not work with the Airforce craft

GHG emissions from ground operations and building efficiency is the single biggest thing they can impact. The new facility is 15 years in the making with geothermal and other net zero methods. The current solar farm is the biggest in the national guard. This was based on congressional money. Energy is captured and stored in batteries to support fire operations in an emergency.

Councilor Gene Bergman – Requests noise mapping and continued updates on ground emissions work.
Col Finnegan – We need data to support noise. We are flying different profiles and testing.

Item ends 6:12PM

4.2 GMT Fare Policy

Clayton Clark goes over fare system, route updates and potential Council resolution.

Councilor Gene Bergman – Outreach to actual current riders on College St route (Route 11) needs to be done before we consider the resolution. College St Shuttle has been fare free for a very long time unlike City loop so extra outreach is not needed there.

CC: GMT to provide fliers on buses. Work with Americorp member to do additional outreach at the Downtown Transit Center and on board if possible.

Chair Barlow– We will circle back offline to confirm outreach and to get information by April 5th and then we will potentially sponsor resolution (as individual Councilors) for first Council meeting with new members. We will also need to communicate with the Mayor-Elect.

Councilor Bergman moves to authorize a communication to the Mayor-Elect with Director Spencer, Clayton Clark, Chair Barlow and Councilor Bergman to explain the resolution and the plan to go before full council on April 15th. Chair Barlow seconds. All in favor. Passes unanimously

CS to reach out to Mayor-Elect.

Item ends 6:48PM

4.3 Bikeshare Update

Katie Martin (CATMA) and Jeremy Lynch (BIRD) provide update.

Councilor Gene Bergman – Parking of bikes improperly blocking sidewalks. How is this being resolved?
JL – Majority are parked correctly. Response time is typically 2 hrs. We can continue to communicate to members where and how to park.

GB – Not pleased with having to get another app to report this. Needs to be more proactive work from Bird to resolve.

Chair Mark Barlow – In the previous memo from the 27th there were four discrete action items mentioned as part of parking strategy, which have been implemented?

KM – Some but not yet the infield bike coordinator or city bike infrastructure.

Collin Mcdermuth – Resident and student at UVM, bikeshare user. Is there consideration for moving towards docks?

KM – We had docks previously but it was expensive and the company went out of business. Dockless system was far more successful in our community in terms of generating point to point trips. Hesitant to go back to docks.

CM - Lime has a feature where you have to submit a photo to lock the bike and fee if you park improperly.

JL – This is in place for Bird system as well. Warning system specifics are left open to partners to dictate how this is done either with fine or warning and then ban.

Item ends 7:06PM

4.4 License Plate Reader Technology

Jackie Esperti – Provides overview of communication and efforts at the Statehouse to change Statute that would allow municipal use of license plate reader technology for parking compliance.

Chair Mark Barlow – Supportive of effort to at least get State to allow use.

Councilor Gene Bergman – Concerns with privacy, want to make sure we have safeguards built in
JE – We too want to ensure a secure system is in place. The name is not connected to the plate until someone doesn't pay a ticket within 30 days. Program expunges photos after specified times.

Damion Gilbert, AFSCME Union President – Expresses concern that this will eliminate union positions.
GB – Would like to know what impact is to union jobs and encourages Management and AFSCME leadership to discuss.

Chapin Spencer – That is the plan.

Item ends 7:23PM

5. Director's Report

Director Chapin Spencer – Provides update on Management's report on the City's water main break policies and procedures after receiving an employee complaint.

Megan Moir goes over slideshow of improvements that are underway.

Councilor Gene Bergman – Would like CC to be made aware of boil water notices.

MM and CS – That is currently done and we will continue to do this.

Damion Gilbert – Recounts situation of two previous water main breaks and problems with how the break was handled. There should be zero risk for drinking water.

GB – Would like an update once more policy and procedure improvements are in place.

Item ends 8:04PM

6. Councilor Items

Councilor Bergman – Appreciative of staff's work and commitment to the City.

Chair Barlow – Agrees.

7. Next Meeting 4/23/24

8. Adjourn

Meeting adjourns 8:05 PM

Resolution Relating to

FARE POLICY ON GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT
ROUTES IN BURLINGTON

RESOLUTION _____

Sponsor(s): *TEUC*
Introduced: _____
Referred to: _____
Action: _____
Date: _____
Signed by Mayor: _____

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Twenty-Four

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

That WHEREAS, Green Mountain Transit’s (GMT) will return to fare service in 2024 after four years of fare free operation; and

WHEREAS, GMT and the City of Burlington have previously partnered to offer fare free service on the College Street Shuttle, which is the Burlington portion of the Route 11; and

WHEREAS, the Burlington City Council had previously supported expanding fare free service to the City Loop, Route 8; and

WHEREAS, the previous, cash based fare system was regressive, offering the best pricing only to those riders who could afford the upfront cost of a monthly pass, which resulted in only 17% of rides paid for by a monthly pass; and

WHEREAS, GMT’s new fare system is vastly more economically equitable, allowing all riders GMT’s best pricing without purchasing a monthly pass; and

WHEREAS, GMT continues to expect roughly half of riders to qualify for discounted pricing based on their age or disability status; and

WHEREAS, GMT has prioritized the simplification of the fare system by having the same cost per ride regardless of the service, which will now be \$2.00 for riders paying full price and \$1.00 for riders paying a discount price; and

WHEREAS, GMT is able to cap riders daily expenditures for fares to the cost of two rides, which would be \$4.00 for riders paying full price and \$2.00 for riders receiving a discount; and

WHEREAS, GMT is able to cap riders monthly expenditures for fares to the cost of 25 rides, which would be \$50.00 for riders paying full price and \$25.00 for riders receiving a discount price, which are the same prices GMT sold monthly passes for in 2005, and means that a daily rider who previously could not pay upfront for a monthly pass under the old fare system will pay 32% less for fares each month; and

WHEREAS, these monthly spending caps will apply to all urban, commuter, and LINK Express routes, where previously commuter monthly passes were \$75 and LINK Express monthly passes were \$150; and

WHEREAS, GMT's new fare system will have increased opportunities for employers, human service organizations, and other organizations to pay fares, and GMT will actively work to promote these programs in the hopes of limiting the number of riders paying out of pocket for fares; and

WHEREAS, GMT's urban drivers, members of the Teamsters Local Union Number 597, provided written testimony to the Transportation, Energy, and Utility Committee indicating their desire for fares to apply to all urban routes to limit driver conflict with riders confused over which routes require a fare and which ones do not; and

WHEREAS, GMT's dire financial situation will require it to consider all funding options available to help limit future service reductions;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Burlington City Council is in support of the College Street Shuttle portion of the College Street Shuttle / Airport (Route 11) continuing to operate fare free through June 30, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Loop (Route 8) operate as a regular fare service, the same as other Burlington transit service, through June 30, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after fares have been in place for one year, GMT is asked to present the Transportation, Energy, and Utility Committee with ridership data to verify that the expected equity gains are occurring, for the purpose of determining whether the Burlington City Council should permanently support the College Street Shuttle portion of Route 11 operating fare free and the City Loop (Route 8) operating with regular fare service.

Burlington City Council Meeting

Responses to Questions

The following are responses to questions posed by Burlington City Councilors to the project team for the Burlington-Winooski Bridge and Intersection projects during the council meeting held on January 16, 2024. These responses do not reflect all questions as many were answered directly during the meeting. The questions below reflect those that we were not able to answer at the time, where more information was specifically requested, or that we felt additional clarification was warranted. The questions are paraphrased based on available meeting notes.

Councilor Barlow

Q. What would it mean for the design if there were two lanes on the bridge rather than four?

A: As part of the scoping study that was completed in 2019 by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), traffic analyses indicated that reducing the bridge to anything less than four lanes will significantly degrade traffic conditions, causing southbound queues to spill back into the circulator on the Winooski side and create unacceptable levels of congestion. The traffic models developed as part of this subsequent phase of the project, for analysis of maintenance of traffic during construction, support that determination from the scoping study with updated traffic data. The existing and projected future traffic volumes warrant a four-lane bridge in order to provide an acceptable level of service, and the project team, including VTrans, Cities of Burlington and Winooski DPW staff, and CCRPC, is unified in the decision to advance the project with four lanes.

If traffic demand changes in the future, lanes can be repurposed on the bridge by restriping lanes or as part of future bridge maintenance projects, and building the bridge to the proposed width provides future flexibility to accommodate changing travel patterns. In addition to future flexibility, the four lanes accommodate emergency vehicles and transit, and allow for the bridge to act as an emergency crossing in the event of a major accident or incident on Interstate 89.

Q. Why does the project propose shared use paths as opposed to separated bike and pedestrian facilities?

A: The project advisory committee for the scoping study, consisting of members of VTrans, Cities of Burlington and Winooski, CCRPC, GMT, CATMA, Local Motion and UVMCC, guided the selection of the shared use paths on each side of the bridge. The project team is actively considering the bike and pedestrian features of the bridge and intersection project, with the goal to improve mobility for non-vehicular users. Options to reallocate the space between the two shared use paths, ways to separate bike and pedestrian space, and winter maintenance concerns are all being weighed in these evaluations. Although physically separated bike and pedestrian space, either by posts or barrier, or using curb, is not anticipated to be feasible for the project, striping and signing are being evaluated to provide specific lanes or to delineate direction of travel for bikes and pedestrians.

Councilor Carpenter**Q. How will Burlington have an opportunity to continue to engage in the project?**

A: The City Council will have a continued role in the project at various milestones. In the near future the Council will need to review and approve the Finance and Maintenance agreement between VTrans and the City. This document governs the agreement between the City of Burlington and VTrans as it relates to funding responsibilities for the project.

The public will have the opportunity to provide specific input on aspects of bridge aesthetics (such as lighting or railing type, and overlooks), and park restoration. We anticipate starting to seek input on these items later in 2024 and 2025. Additionally, public comment on all aspects of the project will continue to be received and considered; however, the project may not be capable of implementing all comments received.

Councilor Hightower**Q. In relation to concerns expressed with vehicle speeds on the proposed bridge: Can you predict how accident incidents will change based on the proposed bridge and intersection layout?**

A: Overall, the number of accidents is anticipated to decrease through the intersection and across the bridge. This assessment is based on a reduction in potential conflict points within the overall intersection, providing barrier separation across the bridge, and simplified geometry throughout the project site.

Councilor Bergman**Q. Identified that the proposed shared use path on the bridge will be different than the existing Riverside path, the Riverside path has refuge space that can be used by bikes and pedestrians to avoid conflict.**

A: The existing Riverside bike path is approximately 8 feet wide paved area and has a 3 to 4-foot grassed esplanade between the edge of curb and the pavement for the path. Measured from edge of curb to the back of the rail on the segment just south of the bridge, there is approximately 12 feet of width. As currently proposed, the shared use path on the bridge is 12 feet wide. The transitions to and from the existing Riverside path and the bridge are a key consideration of the final composition of the shared use paths on the bridge. The project team is actively considering the bike and pedestrian features of the bridge and intersection project and assessing options to reallocate the space between the two shared use paths (potentially make one side wider than the other), ways to separate bike and pedestrian space, and reviewing winter maintenance concerns.

Q. What would it take to have a protected bike lane? What width of path or overall width of bridge is required to have protected bike lanes?

A: Assessing the feasibility of protected bike lanes is primarily based on winter maintenance concerns, future bridge maintenance considerations, and constructability. There are also considerations for overall bridge width, depending on the arrangement of protected lanes. Adding protected bike lanes that

accommodate pedestrian and bi-directional bike traffic on both sides of the bridge (as the shared use paths do) would increase the width of the bridge significantly. Accommodating protected bike lanes without increasing the bridge width would only allow for single-direction bike traffic on each side of the bridge. The proposed configuration keeps the shared use paths at the same grade as the roadway. This allows for additional flexibility in maintaining traffic during bridge construction, as lanes can be shifted to one side of the bridge or the other, to allow for a wider and safer construction area. Keeping the shared use paths at the same level as the roadway also allows more flexibility for future reallocation of space and future bridge maintenance (deck replacements, barrier replacement, etc.), by being able to remove the barrier and shift traffic to one side or the other. Having protected bike lanes, either through using a curb and raised sidewalk, or introducing an additional barrier or fixed object to delineate bike and pedestrian space, complicates winter maintenance and makes it challenging for DPW to provide a safe and clear sidewalk and bike path during winter months.

In the absence of a specifically protected bike lane, the project team is evaluating methods to provide separate space for bikes and pedestrians. This may include one or more of the following: revising the overall width of the shared use paths to favor one side or the other and using signing, striping, and/or different surface treatments to delineate bike and pedestrian lanes.

Q. Are the travel lane width increases required? Can the bridge be widened further to increase the shared use path widths ?

A: The proposed 11-foot-wide travel lanes are based upon the Vermont State Design Standards. These recommended widths of travel lanes are based on roadway classification, traffic volume, and design speed. This roadway is a principal arterial, which indicates that it is a critical roadway with a relatively high traffic volume. This road is also a designated truck route and conveys US Routes 2 and 7. The following is from the Vermont State Design Standards: “On urban and village Principal Arterials, lane widths may vary from 10 to 12 feet, and there should be appropriate offsets to curb. The 10-foot widths are appropriate in highly restricted areas having little or no truck traffic. The 11-foot lanes are used extensively for urban and village Principal Arterial street designs. The 12-foot lane widths are generally used on all higher speed, free-flowing Principal Arterials.” Based on this information, 11 feet was selected as the appropriate lane width, and approved by the City of Burlington, City of Winooski, and the CCRPC. Based on the lane width feedback received to date, the project team is considering the feasibility of reducing the lanes to 10.5 feet, however this will be dependent on the alignment of the new bridge and will only be considered if the new bridge has a tangent alignment. If the new bridge has a curved alignment, it will not be possible to reduce the lanes to less than 11 feet due to off-tracking of larger vehicles on curved portions of the alignment.

The shared use path doubles the available space for pedestrians and bicyclists compared to the existing bridge. Further increasing the width is a financial cost/benefit consideration that is being weighed by the overall project team as this will result in more direct costs to the cities and will reduce federal and state funding available for other town highway bridge projects throughout the state.

Councilor Doherty

Q. The project area is among an environmental resource, specific to the construction of the project in the river. At what point is that work/review done.

A. As part of the project, environmental resource assessments have been conducted to identify wetland and watercourse limits, as well as identify sensitive plant and animal populations in the project area. Historic reviews and archaeological assessments have also been performed. The project must comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, as well as comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act requirements which pertain to potential impacts to historic resources and park/public lands. The project must also comply with Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations for environmental permits. The project team is working through these processes with VTrans environmental and cultural resource staff. The design will seek to mitigate impacts to the extent practicable and will develop contract language inclusive of all restrictions, limitations, and other permitting requirements. The design-build Contractor will be required to obtain final permits and construct the project in compliance with all municipal, state and federal regulatory requirements.

Councilor Traverse

Q. Has there been specific engagement with Emergency Services and GMT or is that anecdotal, and is this in a format that can be public?

A: The project team has held meetings with City of Burlington and City of Winooski emergency services, UVM Medical Center, as well as GMT. Additional meetings with these groups, as well as other regional emergency services providers will be held on an ongoing basis as the project develops. The project team is not planning to publish specific information from meetings with individual stakeholders but can provide information on which stakeholder meetings are being held and can convey key takeaways from stakeholder meetings as requested.

Q. Is there a way to obtain data on the mirror damage mentioned or other vehicle incident data?

A: The mirror damage mentioned was brought up as an anecdotal statement about the lane widths, based on the project team's meetings with transit and emergency services stakeholders. This information alone is not driving design decisions on lane widths but is being considered as part of a wider set of data and criteria that are used to define the lane and shoulder widths on the bridge. Subsequent to the meeting, we reached out to GMT, as well as the emergency services in Burlington and Winooski. GMT responded saying they had two mirror incidents since April 2023, both of which resulted from cars coming in contact with the bus from the adjacent lane.